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UNCLAS KUWAIT 000728

SIPDIS

ABU DHABI FOR MEPI REG OFC

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SUBJECT: KUWAIT RESPONSE TO SPA PROPOSALS

REF: STATE 6225

1. Post's MEPI committee recommends two of the six Standing Program Announcement (SPA) proposals for funding. They include applications from, in descending order, the Sharqiyat Institution (SPA-105-168) and Young Entrepreneurs' Organization (SPA-105-153). In Post's view, these were the highest quality proposals likely to succeed in Kuwait within the projected time frame.

2. The Sharqiyat proposal's goal of media training for female journalists is achievable and particularly useful in Kuwait where media, in Post's determination, is in need of professional development. The plan's strategy is concise and detailed. The project will provide training to lower level journalists who are not often offered such opportunities. Furthermore, building a network of professionally trained female journalists will support women's efforts to gain full political rights. Post's one reservation is that the proposal presented no budget although the table of contents indicated the inclusion of a budget.

3. The Young Entrepreneurs project seeks to accomplish a narrowly defined goal within a detailed timeline providing a mechanism to measure success. While the proposal does not address differences in unemployment between the Gulf and other Middle East countries, its focus on increasing entrepreneurship is still germane in Kuwait. The budget request is itemized and coherent. Since the organization has experience in this type of project in the Gulf, Post would be curious to learn about its progress thus far.

4. Post does not recommend funding the four remaining proposals:

--National Center for State Courts (SPA-105-201): Post is happy to reconsider this group, but their organizational overview booklet did not provide any specific project proposal.

--Saudi Institute (SPA-105-219): The proposed radio station does not fill a communication void as Radio Sawa and Al Hurra television already exist nor does it present a tangible goal.

--Labor Solidarity (SPA-105-212): The project is not well suited for Kuwait since labor unions tend to be biased and not representative of their membership. In addition, the large expatriate workforce in Kuwait is not empowered to influence labor law reform.

--ETS (SPA-105-210): They present a good idea with online education, but its success is uncertain. It would be necessary first to gauge the Kuwaitis' interest in distance learning rather than assume their engagement.

LEBARON